

September 25, 2006

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)
County of Mendocino Department of Transportation
Storm Damage Improvement Project
Mendocino County
WDID Nos. 1B06108WNME, 1B06140WNME, 1B06141WNME, 1B06142WNME**

On August 3, 2006, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the County of Mendocino Department of Transportation (Mendocino DOT) requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Elkhorn Road Storm Damage Project. On September 11, September 13, and September 14, 2006, the Regional Water Board received additional information concerning additional sites to be included in the County of Mendocino Department of Transportation Storm Damage Improvement Project. The proposed project will impact Waters of the United States associated with Rancheria Creek and the Garcia River Hydrologic Unit No.113.70 as well as to Short Creek and the Middle Reach of the Eel River Hydrologic Unit No. 111.70.

The proposed project has five locations. Four sites are located on Elkhorn Road at post miles 2.92 (APN 04932024), 4.15 (APN 04934041), 4.25 (APN 04934041), and 4.65 (APN 04934042). Elkhorn Road is located southeast of Yorkville on State Highway 128. The fifth site is located on Short Creek Road at post mile (PM) 1.13 (APNs 03243011, 03244021). Short Creek Road is accessible from State Highway 162 via East Lane in Covelo.

The purpose of all five projects is to stabilize storm damage that occurred during the 2005/2006 winter. Elkhorn Road sites at PMs 4.15, 4.25, and 4.65 as well as the Short Creek Road site will all rebuild the road embankments and shoulders in areas damaged by erosion during the winter storms. The Elkhorn Road site at PM 2.92 will restore a partially-rusted culvert that conveys Rancheria Creek under Elkhorn Road, and to repair a sinkhole that appeared in the road shoulder near the inlet of the culvert during high storm flows.

The work at the three sites on Elkhorn Road at PMs 4.15, 4.25, and 4.65 will include reconstruction of the embankments with rock slope protection, and reinforcing the shoulders with application of new gravel. The work will be done in the height of the dry season. There are no wet pools near these sites, so there are no fish related concerns. In order to form a more robust, erosion-resistant embankment, a trench will be dug at the toe of the slope for the placement of one-ton rip rap. Geotextile material will be placed on the damaged embankment, and the slope will be rebuilt with half-ton rip rap. The shoulder will be rebuilt with gravel.

The work at the Short Creek Road site will restore the embankment, and armor it with rock slope protection. Rock groins, backed with willow plantings, will be installed in order to slow the current, trap sediment, and eventually develop a biological barrier to ward off future erosion damage.

At the Elkhorn Road PM 2.92 site, Mendocino DOT will prepare a shaped bed and place rock slope protection at the downstream end of the culvert. The rusted culvert will be lined with concrete. Work to repair the sinkhole will include filling the bottom six feet with cobbles, covering the cobbles with imported borrow material, and rebuilding the shoulder with aggregate base.

The total area of permanent fill associated with the project is approximately 0.35 acres.

Compensatory mitigation for this project is not required.

Non-compensatory mitigation will include the use of best management practices (BMPs) to prevent soil erosion or discharge of sediment to Waters of the State. Exposed soils at all sites are to be reseeded with a native seed mix for long-term soil stabilization.

The Regional Water Board, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined the project qualifies for Categorical Exemption, Section 15301 – Existing Facilities, pursuant to the CEQA guidelines.

The project is scheduled to begin September 2006, and end prior to October 15, 2006. Staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act Authority. Under Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Section 3858(a): "The executive director or the executive officer with whom an application for certification is filed shall provide public notice of an application at least twenty-one (21) days before taking certification action on the application, unless the public notice requirement has been adequately satisfied by the applicant or federal agency. If the applicant or federal agency provides public notice, it shall be in a manner and to an extent fully equivalent to that normally provided by the certifying agency. If an emergency requires that certification be issued in less than 21 days, public notice shall be provided as much in advance of issuance as possible, but no later than simultaneously with issuance of certification."

Due to the urgent nature of this project and to avoid an emergency situation, a water quality certification will be issued during the 21-day public comment period. Public comments will still be accepted and reviewed during the entire 21-day comment period; and the certification may be modified.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Johncaleb Sarsfield at (707) 576-6728 or at jsarsfield@waterboards.ca.gov or staff member Mona Dougherty at (707) 570-3761 or at mdougherty@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The related documents and comments received are on file and may be inspected or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Blvd., Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.